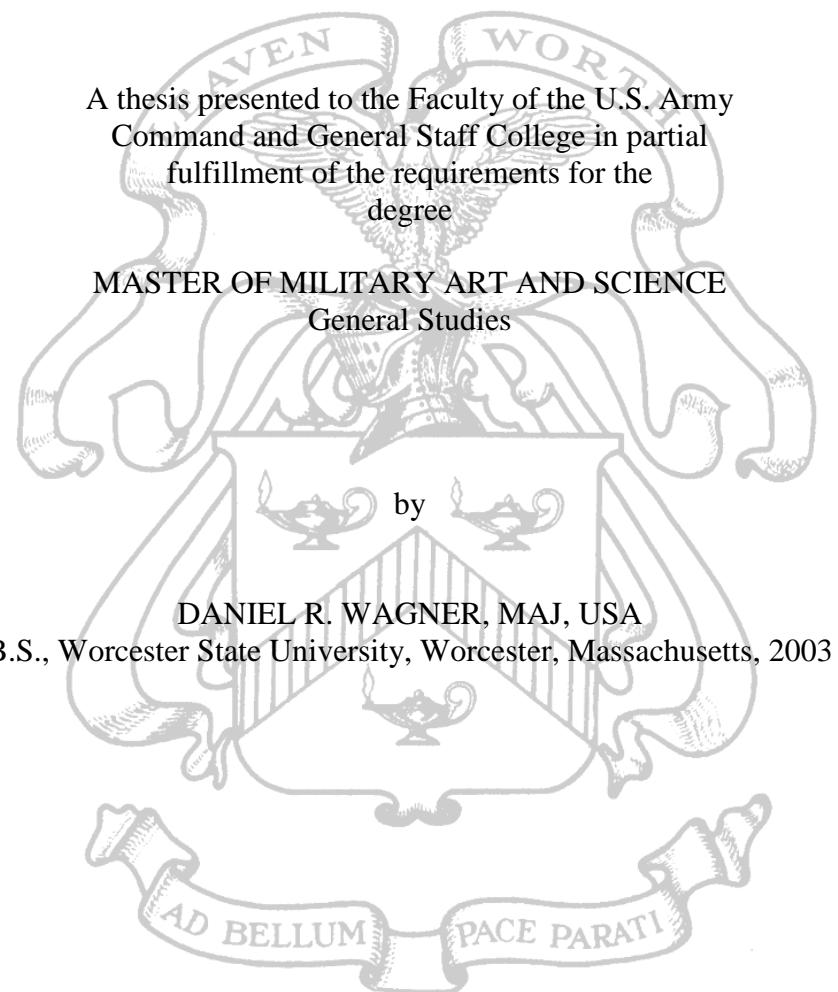


ARMY AIR COMMANDOS: A NEW ORGANIZATION FOR ARMY SPECIAL  
OPERATIONS AVIATION FOREIGN INTERNAL DEFENSE



Fort Leavenworth, Kansas  
2014-01

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

## ABSTRACT

**ARMY AIR COMMANDOS: A NEW ORGANIZATION FOR ARMY SPECIAL OPERATIONS AVIATION FOREIGN INTERNAL DEFENSE**, by MAJ Daniel R. Wagner, 57 pages.

This research examines changes required in Army Special Operations Aviation as it begins to execute Rotary Wing Aviation Foreign Internal Defense (RWAvFID) missions in support of Geographic Combatant Command (GCC) Theater Security Cooperation Plans (TSCP). A quantitative methodology is used to evaluate a proposed organization against United States Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) and GCC priorities. These stakeholder priorities were developed through a review of posture and strategic vision documents.

The findings indicate that a new unit with RWAvFID detachments is an acceptable method to accomplish the assigned RWAvFID mission. A RWAvFID mission command unit in the United States Army Special Operations Aviation Command (USASOAC) would form the nucleus of the capability and consist of three subordinate detachments of planners. This new unit would recruit, assess, and select Army aviators from general purpose aviation forces to serve as RWAvFID practitioners.

Recommendations from this research include: AFSOC and USASOAC assign liaison officers to improve USSOCOM AvFID program synchronization and develop and implement Army RWAvFID doctrine.

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## ACRONYMS

AFSOC	Air Force Special Operations Command
AOR	Area of Responsibility
ARSOA	Army Special Operations Aviation
ARSOF	Army Special Operations Forces
AvFID	Aviation Foreign Internal Defense
FID	Foreign Internal Defense
GCC	Geographic Combatant Command
RWAvFID	Rotary Wing Aviation Foreign Internal Defense
SOAR	Special Operations Aviation Regiment
SOF	Special Operations Forces
SOS	Special Operations Squadron
TSCP	Theater Security Cooperation Plan
TSOC	Theater Special Operations Command
USASOAC	United States Army Special Operations Aviation Command
USASOC	United States Army Special Operations Command
USSOCOM	United States Special Operations Command

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

It is an undeniable reality that the U.S. cannot address the challenges of tomorrow alone. In an era of increasing responsibilities, competing priorities and reduced resources, we must build a Global SOF network of like-minded interagency, allies and partners who proactively anticipate threats and are prepared to operate toward cooperative security solutions in cost-effective ways. We must think differently, seek greater understanding of local, regional, and global contexts, and strengthen trust through interagency and partner cooperation.

— Admiral William McRaven, *SOCOM 2020*

#### Background

Foreign Internal Defense (FID), the mechanism through which the United States Government works with and through a partner nation to protect its society, is nothing new for the United States Army. Special Forces Soldiers have had exceptional success across the globe, in peace and war, to further US operational and strategic goals through FID activities. In the air domain, however, the US Army's Special Operations Command (USASOC) has little to no experience in this critical mission.

In Vietnam and the post-Cold War Department of Defense, the Aviation FID (AvFID) mission was the responsibility of the Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC). With AFSOC's recent divesture of all rotary wing airframes, came an experience gap within AFSOC that made Rotary Wing Aviation FID (RWAvFID) an expensive and risky proposition. As a result, the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), the Combatant Command responsible for all US Special Operations Forces (SOF) and the Department of Defense proponent for FID, assigned the

RWAvFID mission to USASOC with the overall AvFID program remaining an AFSOC responsibility.

### Context and Problem

Since its inception in the early 1980s, following the disastrous helicopter crash at Desert One, the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne) (160th SOAR[A]) has been a unit with narrowly focused capabilities of precision air assault and fires. This regiment, which is the largest component of the United States Army Special Operations Aviation Command (USASOAC), is manned by some of the most experienced and well trained aviation and support Soldiers in the Army. It is also equipped with leading edge technology that enables mission accomplishment for elite special operations ground forces. Despite its formidable capabilities, the Regiment has never been manned, trained, or equipped for the FID mission.

While there was modest, by previous standards, lead time on USSOCOM's decision to transfer RWAvFID from AFSOC to USASOC, there were no substantive changes in USASOAC that contemplated the requirements of this new mission type. Initial Geographic Combatant Command (GCC)<sup>1</sup> requirements for RWAvFID were fulfilled with ad-hoc Subject Matter Expert Exchanges where Soldiers from the Regiment would advise and assist partner nation's militaries on a range of topics including air-

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<sup>1</sup>For the purpose of clarity, all references to the GCC will imply the subordinate Theater Special Operations Command (TSOC). As the special operations functional component of a GCC, the TSOC serves as the command's principle advisor on special operations and normally exercises command of SOF forces in the GCC area of responsibility. Additionally, the TSOC's operations are nested within the GCC's and support overall theater objectives, making a reference to the GCC naturally imply the TSOC.

ground integration, aviation mission planning, and aviation maintenance. Despite the “off the cuff” nature of these engagements, the GCC demand for RWAxFID remained high and, in some cases, grew.

The overarching problem presently facing USASOAC is how to meet the needs of the TSOCs for high quality RWAxFID in an environment of constrained resources. Implied in this problem are additional problems, including: How does USASOAC integrate its forces in the AFSOC-managed AvFID program? How can USASOAC assimilate the RWAxFID mission into its portfolio without unacceptable decrement to its other core mission areas? What changes to present manning, training, and equipping processes does the RWAxFID mission demand?

### Research Questions

This thesis’ primary research question is “What is an acceptable USASOAC structure to meet the needs of GCC Theater Security Cooperation Plans (TSCP)?” The supporting questions are: “What are the force provider’s desired characteristics in a RWAxFID unit?” and “What are the GCC’s desired capabilities from a USASOAC RWAxFID unit?”

The supporting questions must be answered in order to answer the primary research question and will be addressed in this thesis’ methodology and analysis.

### Assumptions

In order to properly scope the research, analysis and subsequent recommendations relating to the primary and supporting questions, several assumptions are made regarding the RWAxFID environment. For the foreseeable future, the following will remain true:

1. GCCs will continue to request RWAvgFID in support of Theater Security Cooperation objectives.
2. RWAvgFID engagements, excluding foreign aircraft flight training, will meet GCC TSCP requirements.
3. There will be no USASOC/USASOAC personnel authorization increase supporting a RWAvgFID unit.
4. USASOC will only provide RWAvgFID in the Indirect Support FID role, excluding Direct Support (Not Involving Combat) and Direct Support (Combat Operations) (see figure 1).
5. The demand for traditional Army Special Operations Aviation (ARSOA) capabilities including precision air assault, fires, and aviation sustainment will not decrease

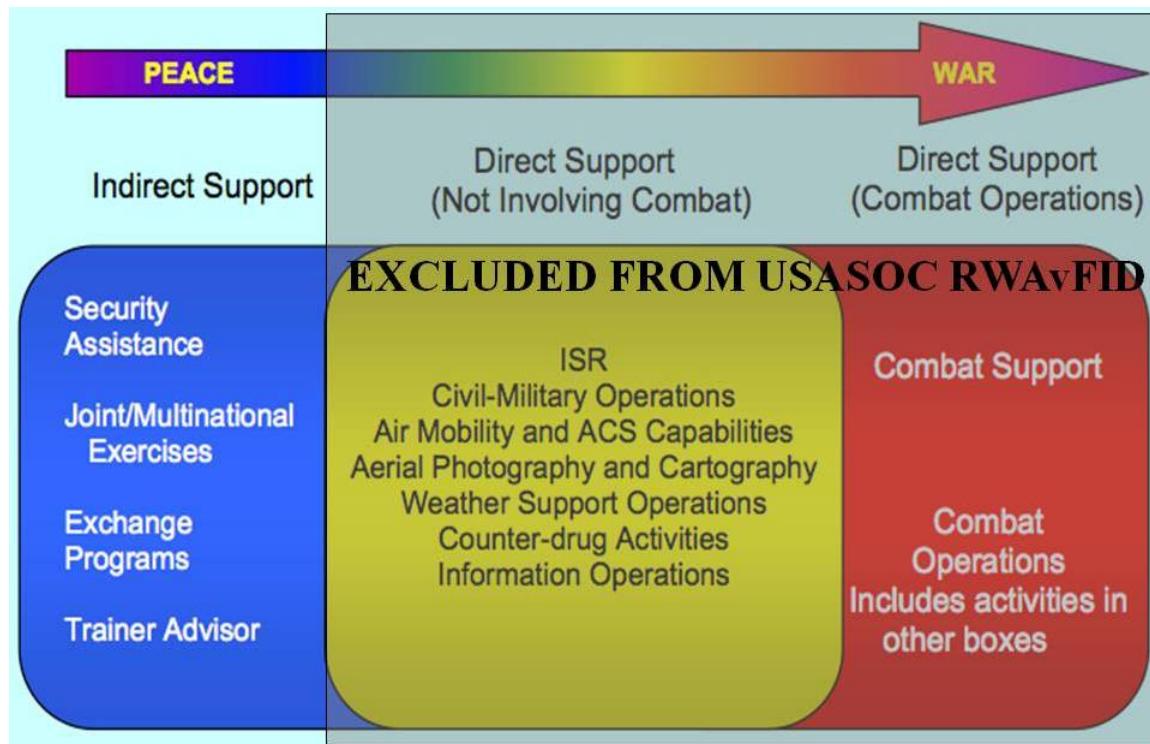


Figure 1. Continuum of AvFID with Exclusions

*Source:* Headquarters, United States Air Force, AFDD 3-22, *Foreign Internal Defense* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, November 2011), 32. Amended by author.

### Limitations

This research for this thesis only excluded classified information and information designated “for official use only.” This limitation introduces several risks to the research’s accuracy and depth. An accurate understanding of the GCC demand for RWAvFID benefits from a detailed list of requests for this capability. While this database exists, its contents are classified and therefore not included in the research. The specific RWAvFID guidance issued by Department of Defense force providers at the USSOCOM, USASOC, and USASOAC levels would yield an improved understanding of these

stakeholder priorities. Because the bulk of this guidance is labeled for official use only or classified, there is an important void in depth of understanding from the force provider perspective. Risk presented by this void is mitigated by recent and comprehensive unclassified information on the subject.

### Delimitations

Without a doubt, ARSOA personnel bring unique skills and experience to an AvFID engagement. General purpose aviation forces are also capable of achieving TSCP objectives in many partner nations as they have in recent and historical instances. However, this thesis will not contemplate the manner of or extent to which general purpose aviation forces are used in GCC AvFID programs, focusing on ARSOF solutions.

The continuum of AvFID includes direct support operations, both with and without US direct combat involvement. This thesis will not, however, include a proposal for an ARSOA AvFID unit capable of executing missions in these FID domains. The proposed unit will be designed for evaluation against AvFID requirements in a “Phase Zero” or pre-conflict environment.

Although there are cogent arguments for organizing the USASOC AvFID within an alternate command, such as the United States Army Special Forces Command, a USASOC component with vast experience in ground-based FID, this study will not evaluate the feasibility or suitability of that or another organizational headquarters.

### Significance of the Study

The “Night Stalkers” of the 160th SOAR(A), the nucleus of today’s USASOAC, has developed, validated, and employed pioneering tactics and technology in the field of aviation; change is nothing new for ARSOA. There is, however, no precedence for a change of mission scope as drastic as the recent addition of RWAvgFID.

From a force provider point of view, this study will ensure the RWAvgFID unit meets Army Special Operations Forces’ (ARSOF), a term referring to all elements of USASOC, short and long range priorities. This synchronization will streamline the integration of this new mission and ensure this new capability is nested well within the existing array of ARSOF capabilities provided to the GCC.

One of the most, important reasons that USASOC and USSOCOM exist is to provide exquisitely manned, trained, and equipped SOF forces to the GCCs. This study and its recommendations will ensure that the RWAvgFID forces meet the requirements of these combatant commanders, fulfilling the central mission of the force provider.

Finally, the contemplation of both force provider and combatant commander requirements and equities will optimize resourcing in a significantly constrained fiscal environment. It stands to reason that there may never be enough RWAvgFID to meet the TSCP desires of every GCC; however a right sized unit will satisfy critical requirements while responsibly employing scarce funding.

In this chapter, the problems associated with USASOC conducting RWAvgFID were presented with an overview of the thesis’ research. The next chapter contains a literature review of existing FID doctrine and force provider and GCC statements relating to AvFID.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The primary question of this thesis is “What is an acceptable USASOAC structure to meet the needs of GCC Theater Security Cooperation Plans (TSCP)?” An appropriate analysis will require an examination of existing literature in several areas. This analysis should also provide foundation for answers to the thesis ‘two supporting questions; “What RWAvgFID organization best supports USASOAC and USASOC strategic vision while meeting GCC requirements?” and “What are the GCC’s desired capabilities from a USASOAC RWAvgFID organization?” The literature review will first examine literature regarding the Air Force’s efforts to establish and operate an AvFID squadron, which began in the early 1990’s. Next it will examine present Joint, Air Force, and Army doctrine relating to FID. Finally, it will describe general and FID specific posture and plans from force providers and the GCCs.

#### Air Force AvFID Experience

The Department of Defense exited the cold war in 1989 with a force tailored for high intensity conflict against a near peer. While the experience in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm showcased the formidable combat power of this legacy force, in short order the joint force would be significantly reduced through budget and force structure reductions. In the following years, the services, and the newly-minted USSOCOM would re-evaluate their role in the new international security environment and take measures, small and large, to meet the defense needs of the United States.

At this pivotal juncture, AFSOC had a relatively robust surgical strike capability designed to support Army and Navy SOF ground forces in that kinetic mission-profile. That said, the Air Force and AFSOC lacked a functional AvFID capability, having abandoned it following the end of the Vietnam War. At the same time, USSOCOM, created in 1987 at the recommendation of the Holloway Commission to improve SOF command and control and inter-service coordination, responding to valid criticism that they were too focused on surgical strike capabilities, was exploring options to strengthen its FID portfolio.<sup>2</sup> USSOCOM's focus shift combined with the AvFID capability gap would begin a process that would culminate in the resurrection of AFSOC's special warfare capability.

In the early 1990s, AFSOC began examining the modern AvFID mission both at headquarters and in the professional journals and scholarly research of its academic institutions. A 1991 Air University Press report proposed a wing structure for an AvFID unit “The proposed FID wing has two flying squadrons, one technical training squadron, and the normal assortment of combat-support squadrons associated with a combat aircrew training wing; that is, maintenance, transportation, communications, supply, services, and security police.”<sup>3</sup> Figure 2, is the organizational structure of this proposed wing from that report. Another 1991 Air University Press paper made recommendations for a rigorous training program, acknowledging the contemporary lack of skill and demanding requirements of the AvFID mission.

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<sup>2</sup>Wray R. Johnson, “Whither Aviation Foreign Internal Defense?” *Airpower Journal* 11, no. 1 (Spring 1997): 66.

<sup>3</sup>Richard D. Newton, “Reinventing the Wheel Structuring Air Forces for Foreign Internal Defense” (Paper, Air University, Maxwell AFB, AL, August 1991), 17.

A basic program for FID cadre would include instruction on the fundamentals of unconventional warfare, revolutionary theory, counterinsurgency, counter narcotics, and internal defense and development. In addition to the fundamentals of FID, cadre would receive further instruction in language proficiency as well as an in-depth area orientation focusing on religious, cultural, social, and economic concerns.<sup>4</sup>

The extensive planning and research for integrating the AvFID mission took over three years and set the conditions for success when the 6<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Squadron (SOS) was activated.

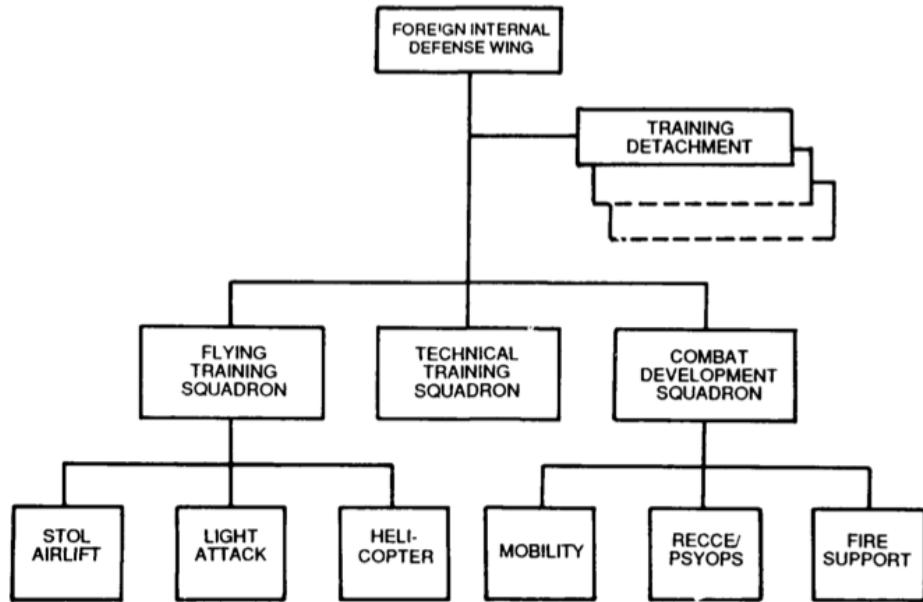


Figure 2. Proposed Wing Structure

*Source:* Richard D. Newton, “Reinventing the Wheel Structuring Air Forces for Foreign Internal Defense” (Paper, Air University, Maxwell AFB, AL, August 1991), 18.

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<sup>4</sup>John R. Moulton, “Role of Air Force Special Operations in foreign Internal Defense” (Paper, Air University, Maxwell AFB, AL, September 1991), 16.

The 6th SOS was officially activated in October 1994 with an organization that employed small detachments, modeled after US Army Special Forces Operational Detachment-Alpha, called Operational Aviation Detachments. These detachments would be composed of multidisciplinary Air Force personnel and, in a similar fashion to US Special Forces detachments, were regionally aligned with special cultural and language training. Since its inception the Squadron has employed over a dozen fixed and rotary wing aircraft to conduct engagements in every GCC Area of Responsibility (AOR).<sup>5</sup>

#### Joint FID Doctrine

For many members of the joint force, FID seems unique to the military. While the outcomes of FID are traditionally regarded as the domain of military forces, the joint definition of FID explains that it is a whole-of government endeavor. Joint Publication 3-22, *Foreign Internal Defense*, defines FID as “Participation by civilian and military agencies of a government in any of the action programs taken by another government or other designated organization to free and protect its society from subversion, lawlessness, insurgency, terrorism, and other threats to its security.”<sup>6</sup>

The department of defense employs multiple tools in support of FID operations. These include Security Cooperation; focused on building relationships that promote US interests and improve access to the globe, Indirect Support; which employs US economic and military capabilities to cultivate partner capacity with exchanges, exercises, and

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<sup>5</sup> Air Force Special Operations Command, “Fact Sheet 6th Special Operations Squadron,” [http://www2.afsoc.af.mil/library/factsheets/factsheet\\_print.asp?fsID=21050&page=1](http://www2.afsoc.af.mil/library/factsheets/factsheet_print.asp?fsID=21050&page=1) (accessed 25 April 2014).

<sup>6</sup> Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 3-22, *Foreign Internal Defense* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2010), ix.

training, Direct Support (not involving combat operations); varying degrees of non-kinetic support to partner nations which may include military information support, logistics support, and intelligence sharing, and finally, and Combat Operations; unrestricted support to include combat activities by US forces, ideally for a short time until partner nation force are able address security threats or the threat subsides.<sup>7</sup>

The GCCs are responsible for planning and executing FID engagements in their respective areas of responsibility and within the indirect support domain of FID, these will normally be nested within the GCC TSCP and commanded by the TSOC. Joint FID doctrine also describes USSOCOM's role in FID as a force provider and explains that SOF forces conducting FID are normally under the operational control of a TSOC, which may also integrate theater assigned SOF to complement SOF forces allocated from USSOCOM.<sup>8</sup>

#### Air Force FID Doctrine

Air Force Doctrine Document 3-22, Foreign Internal Defense, describes both broad FID theory and concepts and operational and tactical employment of air forces in the FID realm.<sup>9</sup> It recognizes the joint definition of FID and does not diverge significantly from broad concepts presented in JP 3-22. It does, however, provide unique doctrinal insight to the AvFID mission by devoting an entire chapter to the topic including FID models, AvFID organizational core competencies, and integration of

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid., x.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., VI-4.

<sup>9</sup>Headquarters, United States Air Force, Air Force Doctrine Document (AFDD) 3-22, *Foreign Internal Defense* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2011).

AvFID with FID and TSCP operations. Figure 3 depicts the Air Force's array of FID activities beginning with Indirect Support and progressing in degree to Direct Support.



Figure 3. Air Force FID Activities

*Source: Headquarters, United States Air Force, Air Force Doctrine Document (AFDD) 3-22, *Foreign Internal Defense* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, November 2011), 6.*

In contemplation of the appropriate unit for the AvFID mission, the Air Force doctrine addresses several key elements. In what is termed a foundational doctrine statement, it addresses unit size by stating “Foreign Internal Defense (FID) efforts are most successful when they preclude the need to deploy large numbers of US military

personnel and equipment.”<sup>10</sup> Air Force doctrine also describes a six month AvFID individual and team training process that includes “area orientation, field-craft, and ‘move, shoot, and communicate’ ground-combat operating skills”<sup>11</sup> among others. Finally, the comprehensive Air Force FID doctrine makes it abundantly clear that, while requirements for foreign language vary by mission, the skill’s value cannot be overstated.

#### Army FID Doctrine

Similar to the Air Force, the Army has one comprehensive doctrinal document covering FID operations. It also examines the FID mission from the strategic point of view but also addresses organization, training, and employment. Most prominently, in the context of this thesis, there is no mention of AvFID on any page of the manual.

In its introduction, Field Manual 3-05.2 Foreign Internal Defense, implicitly excludes AvFID, acknowledging the lack of experience and training in the mission by stating “Army (FID) efforts, in general, include ARSOF units, particularly Special Forces (SF), Military Information Support (MIS), and Civil Affairs (CA), because they are well suited to conduct or support FID operations.”<sup>12</sup> Additionally, the chapter of the field manual that addresses FID organization and responsibilities, while providing ample information about the capabilities and roles of Special Forces, Military Information Support, and Civil Affairs in FID, makes no mention of ARSOA. In fact, the only mention of AvFID in the entire field manual is one sentence in the chapter covering

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid., vii.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 61-62.

<sup>12</sup>Headquarters, Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 3-05.2, *Foreign Internal Defense* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office September 2011), 1-1.

employment considerations which states “Special Operations Aviation Regiment (SOAR), Sustainment Brigade (Special Operations) (Airborne) (SB[SO][A]), and Rangers may conduct training in specific areas as well, typically with HN SOF.<sup>13</sup>

Unique to the Army FID doctrine are practical tools intended for use by ARSOF conducting FID missions. These include templates for planning documents, site survey tasks and considerations, and example operations orders with FID-specific structure. Although these tools were clearly created for ground FID engagements, many of them in part or whole could prove useful in the planning, execution, and integration of AvFID engagements. A valuable tool used by SOF forces to store and retrieve information derived from historical FID engagements, mentioned in the lessons learned section of the Army FID Field Manual, is the Special Operations Debrief and Retrieval System. Although the contents of this system are classified, they might benefit from modification or expansion to better support RWAvgFID engagements. Another trait unique to Army FID doctrine is the extensive contemplation of interagency integration. In both broad and explicit ways, the FID Field Manual describes responsibilities across a wide array of interagency partners with best practices and considerations for ARSOF forces conducting FID.

#### GCC TSCP Vision and Requirements

The Goldwater Nichols Act of 1986 brought the elements of the US Joint Force under the command of a single commander responsible for all DoD activities in an assigned area of responsibility. Through the global force management process, these

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 5-2.

commanders, formerly known as Commanders in Chief's and presently referred to as Geographic Combatant Commanders, request SOF forces from force providers to supplement theater assigned SOF in FID and many other missions. The following paragraphs examine the GCC stated priorities and strategic vision relating to TSCP and building partner capacity.

It is no secret that the US sees the Pacific as a strategically important global region. In countless public and media engagements key leaders in the US Government have described or alluded to a pivot or rebalance of the elements of national power toward the Pacific. Therefore, it stands to reason that military efforts in the Pacific, including FID, will receive relatively more resources than they have in the preceding decade where the US was keenly focused on Southwest Asia and the United States Central Command area of responsibility. In a 2013 document titled United States Pacific Command Strategy 2013, the GCC describes a TSCP focused on an increasing number of partner nations in the Pacific. “(United States Pacific Command) USPACOM will enhance interoperability with allies and partners and develop the capacity of partners to cooperatively address regional challenges. This effort will move beyond traditional relationships to include security cooperation with China and others when there are shared interests and where cooperation can produce mutual benefits.”<sup>14</sup> Based on this, it is reasonable to assume that this GCC will desire a RWAvgFID capability that is capable of conducting engagements in a diverse array of partner nations with a wide array of existing military capabilities.

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<sup>14</sup>United States Pacific Command. “USPACOM Strategy,” <http://www.pacom.mil/about-uspacom/2013-uspacom-strategy.shtml> (accessed 25 April 2014).

The United States Central Command, focused on Southwest Asia, the Middle East, and Northeast Africa lists ten priority efforts in its March 2014 *Commander's Posture Statement*. Of these ten efforts, four are accomplished or significantly supported by FID and Security Assistance operations, showcasing the healthy demand for these capabilities. With regard to TSCP outcomes, the Combatant Commander mentions several common conditions “Tangible by-products include increased access, influence, enhanced interoperability and improved security for forward-deployed forces, diplomatic sites and other U.S. interests.”<sup>15</sup> Based on this statement, one can assume that United States Central Command desires a RWAvgFID capability that can shape regional relationships and improve multinational operations in an effort to improve security in a uniquely unstable region.

The GCC responsible for South and Central America, United States Southern Command, mentions several nations as partners with major and ongoing security cooperation relationships. These are Brazil, Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, Columbia, and Peru. Although the Southern command does not describe a relative weight to these relationships, Department of State foreign military financing figures for 2013 hint at the disparity amongst these security cooperation relationships. Almost half of the 47 million US Dollar budget for foreign military financing in the United States Southern Command area of responsibility was spent in Columbia. This disparity appears to suggest that this GCC may favor a RWAvgFID capability that is capable of focused and enduring engagements in a smaller number of partner nations. Moreover, as Columbia is a nation

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<sup>15</sup>United States Central Command, “Commander’s Posture Statement,” <http://www.centcom.mil/en/about-centcom-en/commanders-posture-statement-en> (accessed 25 April 2014).

with a long history of significant US military engagement, this GCC might also desire a RWAvgFID capability with more experienced and better trained personnel.

While more than one GCC mentions access and influence as an end to TSCP engagements, United States Africa Command may value this above all others. With few forward deployed forces in its area of responsibility and a relatively immature array of partner military forces, access may be mission success in Africa, at least in the short term. The United States Africa Command's Commanding General, General David M. Rodriguez, made the point succinctly in an April 2014 Pentagon news conference "Our programs, exercises and operations strengthen military-to-military relationships in a region where the United States has little forward presence"<sup>16</sup> The relatively immature TSCP program in Africa may disproportionately demand a RWAvgFID capability with significant FID training. Additionally, the small number of advanced partner nation militaries with advanced aviation capabilities demands far less experienced RWAvgFID personnel when compared to other GCC areas of responsibility.

#### AvFID Force Provider Strategic Documents

As US interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan subside, the US Government, including the Department of Defense, have taken a close look at the future international security environment, US national strategy, and present capabilities. For the joint force this has meant investment, divestment, and rebalancing across functional and regional domains in order to produce a "right-sized" military. In the SOF component of the joint

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<sup>16</sup>United States Africa Command, "Africa Presents Challenges, Opportunities to U.S. Command," <http://www.africom.mil/Newsroom/Article/12025/africa-presents-challenges-opportunities-to-us-command> (accessed 25 April 2014).

force (USSOCOM) and the Army (USASOC) this examination has taken many forms, but the most prominent are strategic vision/guidance documents entitled *SOCOM 2020* and *ARSOF 2022*. In broad terms, these documents provide a strategic blueprint for post-Iraq/Afghanistan SOF and highlight the commands' priorities in transformation.

As the Department of Defense's Combatant Command for SOF, USSOCOM maintains a decidedly strategic tone in its vision statement. With regard to the method of supporting future TSCPs with SOF, the document highlights unit size and cost as critical to success: "Whenever possible, we will develop innovative, low-cost, and small-footprint approaches to achieve our security objectives, relying on exercises, rotational presence, and advisory capabilities."<sup>17</sup>

*SOCOM 2020* aligns efforts to support DoD and National strategy into four priority lines of operation. Two of the four are particularly appropriate to the subject of this research. In the "Expanding the Global SOF Network" line of operation, the command endeavors to prevent and deter future conflicts with engagements across the globe, managed by well resourced TSOCs. The document describes the synchronization and character of this line of operation: "In support of Ambassadors and GCCs, aligned with our interagency partners, SOF will provide small unit, forward-based persistent presence closely integrated with our partners to protect our interests and provide rapid response."<sup>18</sup> This suggests that USSOCOM places a higher priority on a RWAfFID capability that is trained to interact with other government agencies and capable of

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<sup>17</sup> Commander, United States Special Operations Command, *SOCOM 2020: Forging the Tip of the Spear* (MacDill AFB, FL: Government Printing Office, 2013), 2.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 5.

persistent engagements in small units across the globe. Another of the priority lines of operation, titled “Responsive Resourcing,” acknowledges the impact of the DoD’s exigent fiscal situation. The document articulates the command’s dedication to succeed despite resourcing challenges “We recognize the Department of Defense’s challenging fiscal environment. We are committed to our disciplined resourcing process to ensure success as USSOCOM’s missions, responsibilities, and capabilities continue to adapt to the current and projected fiscal landscape.”<sup>19</sup> This statement and the undeniable realities of the present US defense budget will demand a RWAvgFID capability that is exceptionally efficient with allocated resources and only as large as it must be to accomplish its mission.

Nested within SOCOM 2020 and Army Strategic Guidance, USASOC has published a strategic vision document, ARSOF 2022. This text describes the future operating environment, external strategic guidance, and internal strategic guidance with the intent to provide exceptional SOF capability to the US government over the next decade and beyond. The internal guidance is most pertinent to this research and is organized into six priorities. Two of these six priorities are aptly suited to understanding the problem statement of this thesis; Operationalize the CONUS Base and Optimize Resourcing and Commodity Areas. In the Operationalize the CONUS Base priority, USASOC intends to leverage a significant and underutilized SOF CONUS base, benefiting both the GCCs with increased capacity and the SOF forces with practical experience across mission domains and geographic regions. As a mid-term component of this priority, USASOC plans to “Develop CONUS-based capability to enhance partner-

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 6.

nation rotary-wing capability.”<sup>20</sup> In the Optimize Resourcing and Commodity Areas, ARSOF will divest from obsolete and inefficient mobility platforms and improve or develop platforms for missions for the next decade. With regard to resourcing strategy, the documents says “[USASOC] should embrace an approach to resourcing that is highly agile and encourages our regionally aligned forces to be as varied and unique as their areas of operations and missions require.”<sup>21</sup> This echoes SOCOM 2020’s call for responsive resourcing and alludes to the fact that any future USASOC RWAvgFID unit must make every effort to responsibly resource the capability.

The next chapter will present the research methodology used to evaluate a proposed RWAvgFID unit.

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<sup>20</sup> Headquarters, Department of the Army, *ARSOF 2022* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2013), 21.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this thesis is to answer the primary question: “What is an acceptable USASOAC structure to meet the needs of GCC Theater Security Cooperation Plans (TSCP)?” The outcome of the research will allow USSOCOM and USASOC to provide a RWAxFID capability to the GCCs while supporting institutional vision and priorities. The research employs a literature review to answer supporting questions and uses those answers in a quantitative methodology to answer the primary research question.

This quantitative component of the methodology identifies evaluation criteria for a USASOC RWAxFID unit from the force provider (USASOC) and the combatant commander (GCC) perspectives. The evaluation criteria are derived from these organizations stated priorities and strategic documents and assigned a relative priority. Subsequently, a proposed RWAxFID unit is presented and evaluated against the weighted evaluation criteria to produce a numerical score from USASOC and GCC perspectives. Finally, these numerical scores are analyzed to understand the relative strengths and weaknesses of the proposed unit and answer the primary research question by determining acceptability.

#### RWAxFID Capabilities from GCC Perspective

As noted in the literature review, there are nuanced differences between GCCs with regard to desired RWAxFID capabilities. These capabilities may be fixed geographically with longstanding partner relationships, as is the case with Columbia, or

rapidly evolving and shifting, as they have been in Mali. There are, however overarching common desires for RWAxFID that transcend a particular GCC's area of responsibility.

For the purpose of standardization this research organizes these into four categories:

1. Engagement Capacity: GCCs view AvFID as a valuable component of their FID portfolio and desire a RWAxFID unit that has capacity to conduct multiple engagements per fiscal year. This category was assigned a relative weight of 9 as a result of the high demand for RWAxFID from GCCs.
2. Flexibility: In order to meet the needs of US National Strategy in a constantly evolving international security environment GCCs desire a RWAxFID unit that is able to adapt in mission scope and geographic area. In one area a FID engagement focused on aviation maintenance may best support TSCP goals and in another an engagement focused on ground force integration may yield the best dividends. Moreover, the vast size and cultural diversity in most GCC areas of responsibility necessitate a RWAxFID unit capable of engaging with partner militaries with widely varied levels of ability and resourcing. A relative weight of 8 was used for this category based on the requirement to support a diverse array of partner nations in a dynamic international security environment.
3. Time to Establish: The present demand for RWAxFID is high and the time required to man, train, and equip a USASOC unit will detract from the GCC ability to execute pressing TSCP engagements. Therefore, from the GCC standpoint, the less time required to establish a RWAxFID unit, the better. This category was assigned a relative weight of 4 because the GCCs are presently

capable of conducting limited scope RWAvgFID through the ad hoc arrangement within USASOAC, limiting the urgency somewhat.

4. FID Training Level: FID is a complex and challenging mission to accomplish.

Army Special Forces Soldiers receive months of classroom and practical training on the fundamentals of this mission. Their capability to effectively build partner capacity derived from this intense training is one of the most important reasons why their services are in such high demand amongst the GCCs. The ARSOA force of today has no formal instruction in the planning and execution of FID and must develop and integrate this training into any new RWAvgFID unit. The GCCs desire a RWAvgFID unit that is well prepared for the specific challenges presented by the FID mission. A relative weight of 5 was used for this category as the FID training required for indirect FID operations contemplated by this research are far less than those for direct support and combat FID.

These capabilities are displayed in table 1 with weighted criteria.

Table 1. GCC Capability Evaluation

	GCC Capability Category				<b>Cumulative Score</b>
	Engagement Capacity	Flexibility	Time to Establish	FID Training Level	
Category Description	1 = Unit Capable of Least Number of Engagements 10 = Unit Capable of Most Number Engagements	With Regard to Mission Type and Location: 1 = Least Flexible Unit 10 = Most Flexible Unit	1 = Longest Time to Establish Unit 10 = Shortest Time to Establish Unit	1 = Unit with Least FID Specific Training 10 = Unit with Most FID Specific Training	
GCC Relative Weight	9	8	4	5	
	X	X	X	X	
Proposed Unit Capability					
	=	=	=	=	
Score	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>

Source: Created by author.

#### RWAvFID Priorities from Force Provider Perspective

USASOC has no unit presently trained and equipped for the RWAvFID mission and all engagements in support of GCC TSCPs have been ad-hoc utilization of personnel trained for rotary wing air assault, close combat attack operations, aviation maintenance, and logistics operations. As the Command develops a RWAvFID capability, they may evaluate it against their blueprint for change described in *ARSOF 2022*. This document is nested with the *Defense Strategic Guidance*, the *National Security Strategy*, *USSOCOM 2020*, *The US Army Strategic Planning Guidance*, and the *US Army Capstone Concept*. USASOC describes *ARSOF 2022*'s priorities as "the enabling concepts that will allow us to direct and shape the future development of the force."<sup>22</sup> In light of their importance,

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 18.

the following criteria, derived from the priorities, are used to evaluate the proposed RWAvFID unit.

1. Human Capital Investment: With regard to the RWAvFID mission, this priority will evaluate the degree to which a proposed unit professionally develops existing and new human capital. A RWAvFID unit which invests significantly in the development of assigned personnel through institutionalized training and education would best satisfy this priority. Conversely, one which maximizes ad-hoc employment of subject matter experts from surgical strike ARSOA units would do little to support this priority. Additionally, this category contemplates the degree to which a proposed unit will preserve the force and families. On balance, a larger RWAvFID unit would reduce stress on Soldiers and families while a smaller one would increase the operational tempo of unit members and increase the attendant stress. A relative weight of 9 was assigned to this category as USASOC describes “The ARSOF Soldier as our center of gravity.”<sup>23</sup>

2. Operationalize the CONUS Base: With the mid-term solution of AvFID development, this ARSOF 2022 priority is the only one of the six which explicitly addresses AvFID. In order to best support this USASOC priority, a potential unit would maximize the amount of support to GCCs. As USASOC also describes regional expertise in this priority, a RWAvFID unit with substantive and diverse language and cultural training would best support USASOC’s vision. This category was assigned a relative weight of 7 because

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<sup>23</sup>Headquarters, Department of the Army, *ARSOF 2022*, 18.

although it is a critical priority for USASOC, most of the priority's explanation in *ARSOF 2022* focuses on other special warfare capabilities.

3. Facilitate SOF Mission Command: USASOC describes outdated mission command structures as the single greatest challenge to special operations forces today. In light of this challenge, the evaluation model examines a potential RWAvgFID unit with regard to TSOC interaction, combination of special warfare and surgical strike personnel, and conventional force integration. A successful unit, therefore, would be integrated with TSOC mission command structures through liaisons, mandate billets for Soldiers with special warfare and surgical strike backgrounds, and include the ability to operate with conventional forces using hybrid command structures. This category was assigned a relative weight of 4 as a result of the assumption that USASOC does not desire to build a large mission command capability specifically in the RWAvgFID element of its portfolio.

4. Optimize Resourcing: Since the 2013 publishing of *ARSOF 2022*, the subject of reduced resourcing for the Department of Defense and the United States Army has been the subject of much debate at the national strategic level. Where the debate will settle remains uncertain, however USASOC is certainly focused on ensuring that personnel, materiel, and financial resources are employed with maximum efficiency. As such, the extent to which a future RWAvgFID unit maximizes use of existing personnel, facilities, equipment, and budgets will increase its relative desirability. A relative weight of 9 was used for this category in light of the strong resource constraints of the present day

and the fact that this priority is found both in USASOC and USSOCOM strategic documents.

In table 2, the RWAvgFID capability evaluation criteria are presented with relative weight in each component category.

Table 2. Force Provider Priority Evaluation

	Force Provider (USASOC) Priority Categories				<b>Cumulative Score</b>
	Human Capital Investment	Operationalize CONUS Base	Facilitate SOF Mission Command	Optimize Resourcing	
Category Description	1 = Allows Least Development/Protection 10 = Allows Most Development/Protection	With Regard to AvFID: 1 = Least enhancement of partner capability 10 = Most enhancement of partner capability	1 = Least Mission Command Development 10 = Most Mission Command Development	With Regard to Resources: 1 = Least Required 10 = Most Required	
USASOC Relative Weight	9	7	4	9	
	X	X	X	X	
Proposed Unit Charictaristic					
	=	=	=	=	
Score	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>

*Source:* Created by author.

#### Threats to Internal Validity

The nature of the research methodology required the author to discern the priorities and vision of key leaders and organizations within the DoD. Thus, the primary threat to the research's validity lies in the criteria selected and relative weight assigned from the GCC and force provider viewpoints. This risk is elevated by the fact that many primary sources regarding these priorities are classified, precluding them from

examination and consideration. Moreover, the mechanism through which GCCs request SOF forces for use in their TSCPs, the global force management process, does not provide any significant disincentive for a GCC requesting resources that far outstrip requirements or force provider inventory. Therefore, divining the true demand signal for RWAvFID may be complicated in an environment potentially tainted by GCC “noise.”

The next chapter describes a proposed RWAvFID unit and its performance on the evaluation instruments presented above.

## CHAPTER 4

## ANALYSIS

### Overview

This chapter of the thesis contains the output of the methodology described in the preceding chapter and answers the primary research question “What is an acceptable USASOAC structure to meet the needs of GCC Theater Security Cooperation Plans (TSCP)?” First, a proposed RWAxFID unit will be presented and described with regard to manning, training, and equipment. Next, the proposed RWAxFID unit will be evaluated from a force provider and GCC perspective. Finally, a summary of the results will be presented in order to understand the unit’s relative strengths and weaknesses and answer the primary research question.

### Proposed RWAxFID Unit

In order to accomplish the newly assigned mission of RWAxFID, USASOC may elect to establish a standing unit manned, trained, and equipped for this mission. The proposed RWAxFID unit described in this section is a “middle of the road” option. This research will describe the proposed unit using a “man, train, and equip” framework and also discuss employment method and capacity.

To provide context to the following unit description, figures 4 and 5 are presented below. Figure 4 depicts the proposed RWAxFID unit’s position in the DoD SOF enterprise and the command, direct support, and coordination relationships relating to RWAxFID. Please note that elements of USASOAC, USASOC, and USSOCOM that are

not germane to this research have been omitted from the figure. Figure 5 provides greater fidelity on the structure and manning of the proposed RWAvgFID unit.

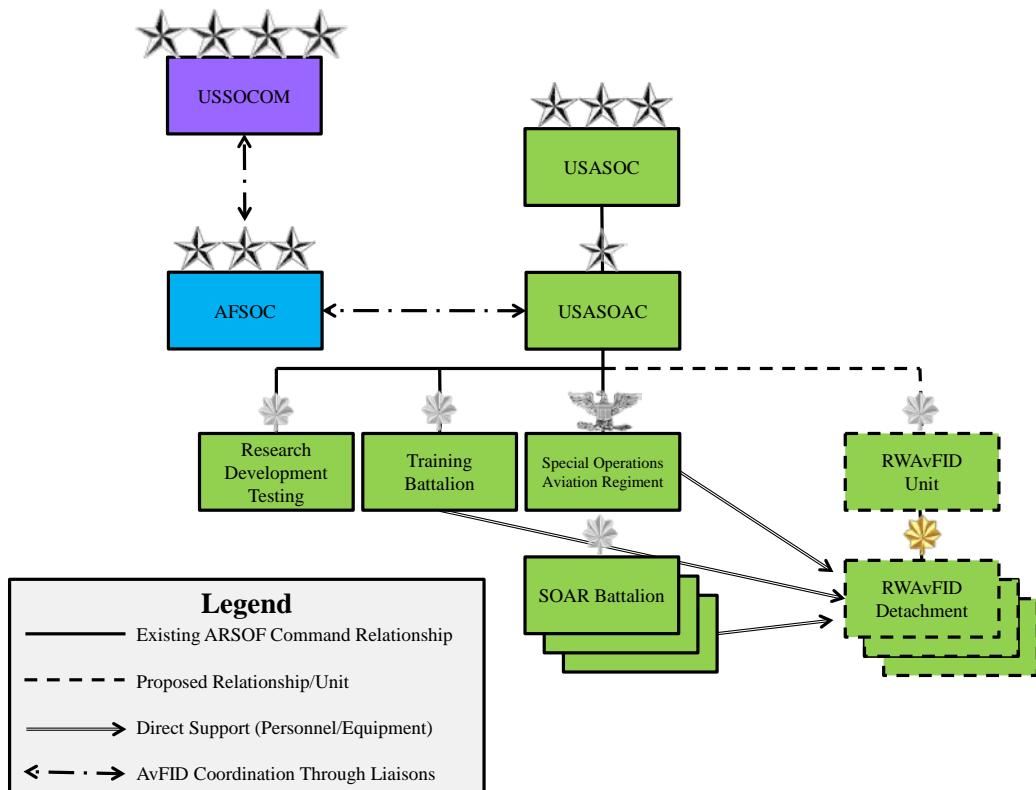


Figure 4. Proposed RWAvgFID Unit Relationships

*Source:* Created by author.

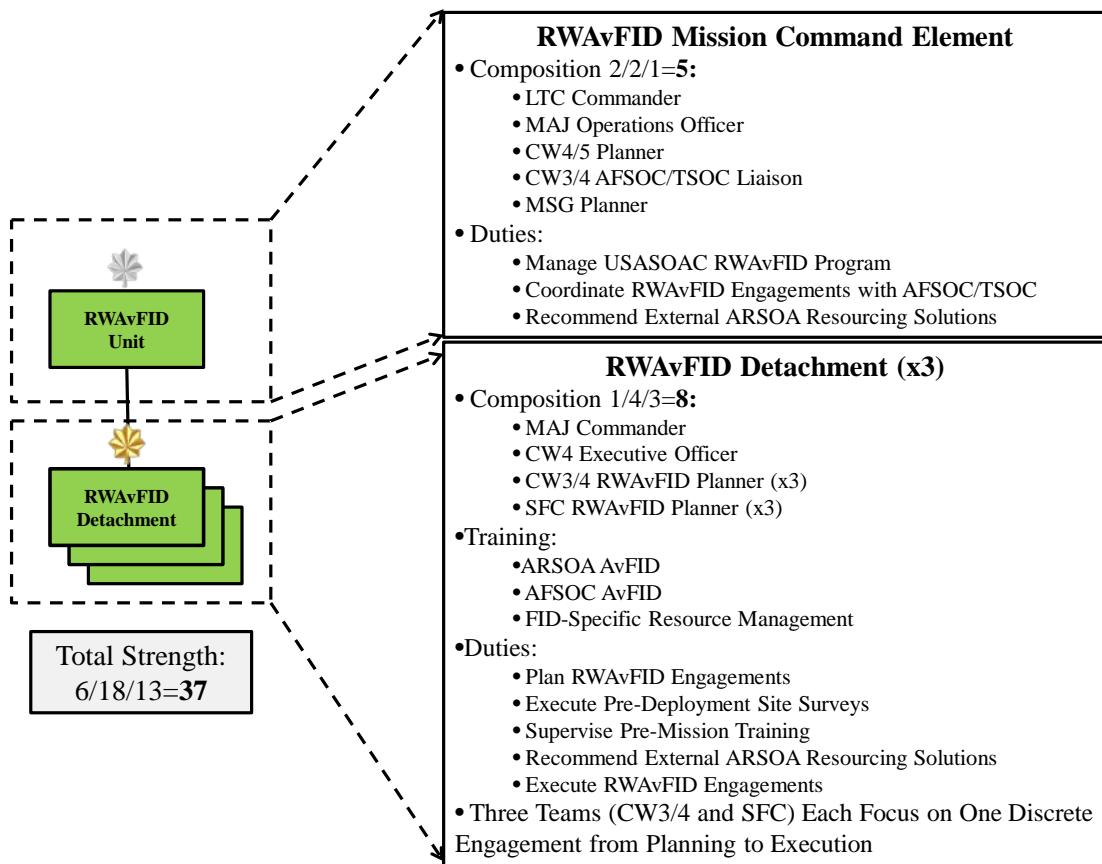


Figure 5. Proposed RWAvgFID Unit Composition

*Source:* Created by author.

The Mission Command Element, or headquarters, would serve as the link between the tactical units of execution and higher and adjacent headquarters; providing synchronization for subordinate detachments, integration with USASOAC and USASOC, and coordination with AFSOC and TSOCs. This element would manage the overall RWAvgFID program within USASOAC and provide information and recommendations to higher command levels. The planners in this unit would manage long range training and deployment calendars and the liaison would reduce friction on individual engagements and broader RWAvgFID program issues.

The action arm of the proposed unit would be the three RWAvgFID detachments. Each lead by a commanding officer and an executive officer, they would contain three subordinate teams of one warrant officer and one senior noncommissioned officer. These teams would be responsible for the mission planning and execution of individual engagements and would make recommendations for augmentation by additional personnel when the scope or depth exceeded their inherent capabilities. With an average cycle from mission assignment to conclusion of 90-120 days, each detachment could execute 3-4 engagements per year for a total of 9-12 engagements per RWAvgFID detachment and 27-36 for the entire RWAvgFID unit. Furthermore, the total number of teams in the proposed unit (9) exceed the total number of GCCs (6), allowing the command the option to habitually align at least one team with each GCC.

Possibly the most familiar SOF Truths is the axiom “humans are more important than hardware.”<sup>24</sup> Nowhere is this more counterintuitive than SOF aviation, where the resplendence of modern aircraft with cutting edge technology can obscure the pivotal role of the humans that operate and maintain them. The new RWAvgFID mission removes specialized aircraft from this equation and but still demands specially selected individuals for mission accomplishment. Soldiers assigned to the proposed RWAvgFID unit could be assessed from the present ARSOA force, but the surgical strike expertise of this population provides little to the RWAvgFID mission. The majority of US Army general purpose aviation Soldiers with 2-3 successful assignments have the training and experience that exceeds the requirements for almost all engagements and, as such, would

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<sup>24</sup>Commander, United States Special Operations Command, *SOCOM 2020*, 9.

be the primary source for personnel to receive AvFID training and man the proposed RWAvFID unit.

Training for the proposed unit would be composed of a two month course taught by USASOAC's Special Operations Training Battalion. Establishment and manning of this training capability is beyond the scope of this research and, as such, will not be presented. The program of instruction would be a hybrid of AFSOC AvFID and ARSOF FID classroom instruction and practical training exercises. Detachment leaders and members of the unit mission command element would also attend 1-2 months of AFSOC taught AvFID to maximize their ability to synchronize with the overall USSOCOM AvFID program. Leaders would also receive 1 week of AvFID resource management training to ensure effective management of funds and associated FID authorities in forward deployed environments with restricted support from traditional resource management systems and personnel.

As this research is focused on developing a RWAvFID capability for use in non-flying and indirect engagements, the proposed unit would require a small amount of equipment. Long range secure communications equipment would allow operations in austere environments. Rugged training support equipment also would enable high-quality instruction in these environments. Finally, force protection weapons and protective equipment without obvious US military signature would promote operational security in areas without robust anti-terrorism and force protection infrastructure. In the context of USASOC, the overall materiel costs associated with the proposed RWAvFID would be negligible.

### Evaluation of Proposed RWAxFID Unit

The proposed RWAxFID unit was scored and integrated into the evaluation mechanisms presented in Chapter 3. The evaluation and numerical score for this unit from the GCC perspective is presented in table 3.

Table 3. Proposed RWAxFID Organization Scored Evaluation (GCC)

	GCC/TSOC Capability Category				Cumulative Score
	Engagement Capacity	Flexibility	Time to Establish	FID Training Level	
Category Description	1 = Unit Capable of Least Number of Engagements 10 = Unit Capable of Most Number Engagements	With Regard to Mission Type and Location: 1 = Least Flexible Unit 10 = Most Flexible Unit	1 = Longest Time to Establish Unit 10 = Shortest Time to Establish Unit	1 = Unit with Least FID Specific Training 10 = Unit with Most FID Specific Training	
GCC Relative Weight	9	8	4	5	
	X	X	X	X	
Proposed Unit Capability	7	6	8	4	
	=	=	=	=	
Score	63	48	32	20	<b>163</b>

*Source:* Created by author.

The proposed RWAxFID unit scored highest in the engagement capacity category, which makes it particularly appealing from all GCC's view as it offers a relatively wide engagement distribution, reducing risk of critical and unsupported engagements. The short length and depth of training, relative to other USASOC special warfare units resulted in a low score for the FID Training Level category. Changes to the proposed training program that would increase this training level would entail a

commensurate increase in the time to establish the organization, reducing the overall score of the proposed RWAvgFID unit.

The proposed RWAvgFID organization's scores from the force provider perspective are depicted in Table 4 below.

Table 4. Proposed RWAvgFID Organization Scored Evaluation (Force Provider)

	Force Provider (USASOC) Priority Categories				<b>Cumulative Score</b>
	Human Capital Investment	Operationalize CONUS Base	Facilitate SOF Mission Command	Optimize Resourcing	
Category Description	1 = Allows Least Development/Protection 10 = Allows Most Development/Protection	With Regard to AvFID: 1 = Least enhancement of partner capability 10 = Most enhancement of partner capability	1 = Least Mission Command Development 10 = Most Mission Command Development	With Regard to Resources: 1 = Least Required 10 = Most Required	
USASOC Relative Weight	9	7	4	9	
	X	X	X	X	
Proposed Unit Charictaristic	5	8	3	6	
	=	=	=	=	
Score	45	56	12	54	<b>167</b>

*Source:* Created by author.

Within the Operationalize CONUS Base and Optimize Resourcing categories the proposed RWAvgFID unit earned its highest marks. The unit's three detachments with three subordinate teams each were critical in the former and the relatively short training program, minimal employment of trained 160th SOAR(A) crews, and low materiel costs combined for the score in the latter. Several factors contributed to the low score in the Facilitate SOF Mission Command category. First, the proposed unit does not have the capability to command and control other SOF forces or integrate multiple SOF functions

in support of more broad special warfare objectives. Additionally, the limited scope of training would not yield officers and non-commissioned officers with extensive SOF skills required for reassignment across the array of USASOC surgical strike and special warfare organizations.

### Summary

The proposed RWAvgFID unit scored similarly from both the GCC and force provider perspectives. Although assessed variables in the two tables are distinct, there are linkages which interconnect the components of the evaluation. In other words, a unit change to affect the score in one category will have impact on the score in other components of both tables. Notwithstanding the risks associated with the evaluation system, the proposed RWAvgFID organization is an acceptable USASOAC structure to meet the needs of GCC TSCP, answering this thesis' primary research question.

This chapter described the proposed RWAvgFID unit and evaluated it from GCC and force provider viewpoints. The next chapter will provide interpretation of findings, implications, and recommendations.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Conclusions

The proposed RWAvgFID unit is certainly acceptable for USASOC to implement in support of the GCCs TSCP requirements. This answer is based on the evaluation criteria presented in chapter 3 and utilized in chapter 4. As discussed earlier, the research's attempt to discern priorities and desires at the USASOC and Geographic Combatant Commander level injects some risk to validity, but this was mitigated through an extensive literature review. If, however, the reader desires to modify the categories or their relative weight, the methodology presented would be very effective in reevaluating this or another proposed organization. There were also other conclusions on the subject of RWAvgFID in USASOC derived from the research in the topics of doctrine, manning, and integration.

Army FID doctrine of today is well written and informed by many years of practical application across the globe in all spectrums of conflict. There is, however, a discernible and significant doctrinal gap with regard to AvFID. As the structure, manning, and culture of the Air Force differs considerably from Army aviation, the use of *Air Force Doctrine Document 3-22 Foreign Internal Defense* inserts risk to mission in ARSOF RWAvgFID operations. Moreover, as it is reasonable to expect future integration of ARSOF ground and aviation SOF forces for FID engagements, this research notes that there is no standing Army FID doctrine that contemplates ground and air FID integration.

In support of maximum resource efficiency, the personnel pool from which future ARSOF FID forces are recruited and selected is important. ARSOA aviators in the 160th

SOAR(A) are recruited, assessed, selected, and trained for the missions of precision rotary wing assault, fires, and aviation sustainment. Employing this scarce population, with its extraordinarily expensive training, for RWAvgFID missions is an inefficient use of resources. This is particularly true when there is a large population of aviation personnel in the general purpose aviation force with the experience and maturity to enter AvFID training and subsequently provide unmatched support to GCC TSCPs.

Presently, AFSOC is the USSOCOM lead for all AvFID within the combatant command. The integration of USASOC RWAvgFID into the AFSOC managed program creates an unprecedented situation in USSOCOM. In other words, there has never been an instance of an enduring USSOCOM program, managed by a service SOF component, responsible for integrating capabilities from another service SOF component for mission success outside a theater of declared combat. This unique situation creates mission command challenges and inserts noteworthy risk to unity of effort within the force provider, USSOCOM.

#### Recommendations for Leader Action

Although USASOC and USASOAC are presently providing an ad hoc solution to the RWAvgFID problem and conducting AvFID engagements across the globe, this research led to several recommendations for leader action that could be incorporated into new or existing initiatives. These recommendations fall into three categories; doctrine, manning, and AvFID program synchronization.

Because of the existing doctrine gap, USASOC and the Combined Arms Center should collaborate to amend and expand Army FID doctrine. This should include addition of doctrine for AvFID that describes nesting within broad US government FID

operations, organization, planning, execution, and post mission activities. Additionally, doctrine should present operating procedures for concurrent ground and aviation FID engagements in the same nation or region where synergy will enhance the overall outcome in support of the TSCP. Additionally, once the tactics techniques and procedures for ARSOF AvFID engagements are validated through practical application, they should be codified in an appropriate Army Tactics Techniques and Procedures publication to improve efficiency and efficacy of future AvFID engagements.

The relatively short lead-time afforded USASOC in the RWAvgFID mission has necessitated the use of personnel from the cockpits and sustainment facilities of the 160th SOAR(A). Employment of these low density and high cost personnel who are untrained for the AvFID mission should only continue until new personnel can be recruited from general purpose aviation forces and trained for an AvFID unit. Utilizing these personnel would reduce operational tempo in the already strained SOAR Battalions and create financial efficiencies by training personnel only for the mission type they will operate within.

Finally, the challenges resulting from the present USSOCOM organization for AvFID with AFSOC as lead and USASOC as subordinately contributing RWAvgFID must be addressed. This could entail separating fixed wing AvFID and RWAvgFID programs, with each USSOCOM component controlling their respective piece of the overall portfolio. As this scenario is unlikely, alternate mechanisms should be emplaced to ensure the AvFID force provided to the GCCs conforms to guidance, provides standardized solutions to GCC requirements, and benefits from cross-talk and exchanges between AFSOC and USASOC. These mechanisms could some or all of the following: a

joint AvFID cell at USSOCOM headquarters, liaison officers assigned from USASOC to AFSOC, a regularly scheduled force provider planning conferences. Whatever solution or solutions are implemented, they must address the stove piping created by the present arrangement.

#### Recommendations for Further Research

Recommendations for further research fall into two broad groups. The first are those related to the USSOCOM AvFID program overall and the second are regarding the execution of RWAvgFID within USASOC. While this list covers many future research questions, it is not an all inclusive list.

The present business practice through which SOF forces for AvFID are requested by GCCs and provided by USSOCOM, referred to as SOF Global Force Management, presents some significant challenges. These stem from the fact that there are no disincentives for GCCs to request FID engagements of a number and length that far exceed the capacity of the force provider. This arrangement creates a dynamic where force providers are, on a case by case basis, required to demonstrate that they cannot support engagements above their capacity. Further research on the question “What is the optimal model for SOF Global Force Management?” may yield suggestions that minimize pressure on the SOF force and equitably and efficiently distribute capacity across the GCCs.

Excluded from research in this thesis, there are additional questions regarding the execution of RWAvgFID within USASOC. First, the fact that there is no established program of instruction in place for RWAvgFID practitioners, the question “What is the optimal training program for USASOC RWAvgFID forces?” would be particularly helpful

for USASOC in the coming years. Second, and although the question appears to be settled, from USASOC's perspective, further research may be helpful regarding the most favorable location within USASOC to develop a RWAxFID force. Although USASOAC provides aviation subject matter expertise to this mission, another USASOC component has significant FID experience that may prove beneficial if assigned the RWAxFID mission. The United States Army Special Forces Command, home to the Green Berets, already provides SOF forces manned trained and equipped for a diverse array of missions, including FID. Thus, the question "Should the United States Army Special Forces Command assume the RWAxFID mission?" is important and would explore in greater depth the relative advantages provided from this alternate task organization. Finally, as many partner nations are unable or unwilling to cultivate and maintain a capable rotary wing component to their armed forces, the utility of RWAxFID in building partner capacity is a matter of some debate. Research answering the question "Is RWAxFID applied in nations that benefit from it?" might prevent inefficient use of limited resources and focus engagements in nations or regions where increased capacity is needed and will yield long term benefits.

### Summary

There is little doubt that the US Government and the Department of Defense's GCCs place a high value on FID in their efforts to achieve strategic objectives. An organization with the characteristics presented in this thesis will be able to support these objectives in partner nations around the globe. In whatever organizational form they come, the new Army Air Commandos will undoubtedly continue the legacy of their

AFSOC and ARSOA forefathers by excelling in rigorous missions in austere locations for the foreseeable future.

## GLOSSARY

**Foreign Internal Defense.** Participation by civilian and military agencies of a government in any of the action programs taken by another government or other designated organization to free and protect its society from subversion, lawlessness, insurgency, terrorism, and other threats to its security.

**Functional Combatant Command.** Combatant Commands that have transregional responsibilities and are normally supporting Combatant Commanders to the Geographic Combatant Command's activities in their area of responsibility(AOR). Functional Combatant Commands may conduct operations as directed by the President or Secretary of Defense, in coordination with the Geographic Combatant Command in whose AOR the operation will be conducted.

**Geographic Combatant Command.** Combatant commanders assigned a geographic area of responsibility (AOR) by the President with the advice of Secretary of Defense as specified in the Unified Command Plan. Geographic Combatant Commands are responsible for the missions in their AOR, unless otherwise directed.

**International Defense and Development.** The full range of measures taken by a nation to promote its growth and to protect itself from subversion, lawlessness, insurgency, terrorism, and other threats to its security.

**Security Assistance.** Group of programs authorized by the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, and the Arms Export Control Act of 1976, as amended, or other related statutes by which the United States provides defense articles, military training, and other defense-related services by grant, loan, credit, or cash sales in furtherance of national policies and objectives.

**Security Cooperation.** All Department of Defense interactions with foreign defense establishments to build defense relationships that promote specific US security interests, develop allied and friendly military capabilities for self-defense and multinational operations, and provide US forces with peacetime and contingency access to a host nation.

**Special Warfare.** The execution of activities that involve a combination of lethal and nonlethal actions taken by a specially trained and educated force that has a deep understanding of cultures and foreign language, proficiency in small-unit tactics, and the ability to build and fight alongside indigenous combat formations in a permissive, uncertain, or hostile environment.

**Surgical Strike.** The execution of activities in a precise manner that employ special operations forces in hostile, denied, or politically sensitive environments to seize, destroy, capture, exploit, recover or damage designated targets, or influence threats.

United States Air Force Special Operations Command. The Air Force component of US Special Operations Command. AFSOC's core missions include battlefield air operations, agile combat support, aviation foreign internal defense, information operations/military support operations, precision strike, specialized air mobility; command and control; and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance.

United States Army Special Operations Aviation Command. The USASOC subordinate command that organizes, mans, trains, resources, and equips Army Special Operations Aviation units to provide responsive support to special operations. Additionally, the command serves as the USASOC aviation staff proponent, and includes a technology applications program office, a flight detachment, a systems integration management office, a regimental organizational applications element, a special operations aviation training battalion, and the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne).

United States Army Special Operations Command. Army Service Component Command that provides trained and ready Special Forces, Ranger, Special Operations Aviation, Military Information Support, and Civil Affairs personnel to Geographic Combatant Commands and U.S. Ambassadors. The USASOC commander exercises command of continental United States-based Regular Army Special Operations Forces. He also oversees and evaluates continental United States-based Army National Guard Special Operations Forces. USASOC is responsible for the development of unique Special Operations Forces doctrine; tactics, techniques, and procedures; and materiel.

United States Special Operations Command. A Functional Combatant Command that exercises Combatant Command of all assigned Active Component and mobilized Reserve Component Special Operations Forces (SOF) minus US Army Reserve civil affairs and military information support forces. When directed, Commander of USSOCOM provides US-based SOF to a Geographic Combatant Command who exercises Combatant Command of assigned and Operational Control of attached SOF through a commander of a theater special operations command or a joint special operations task force in a specific operational area or to prosecute special operations in support of a theater campaign or other operations. . . . When directed, Commander, USSOCOM can establish and employ a Joint Task Force as the supported commander.

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